

## Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA

## § 1455.2

(3) Ownership of the property remains with such Federal agency.

### PART 1455—VOLUNTARY PUBLIC ACCESS AND HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Sec.

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AUTHORITY: 15 U.S.C. 714b and 714c; 16 U.S.C. 3839.

SOURCE: 75 FR 39140, July 8, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

#### § 1455.1 Purpose and administration.

(a) The purpose of this part is to specify requirements and definitions for the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP).

(b) VPA-HIP provides, within funding limits, grants to State and tribal governments to encourage owners and operators of privately-held farm, ranch, and forest land to voluntarily make that land available for access by the public for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting and fishing under programs administered by State and tribal governments. VPA-HIP is not an entitlement program and no grant will be made unless the application is acceptable to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). CCC may reject a application for any reason deemed sufficient by CCC.

(c) The regulations in this part are administered under the general supervision and direction of the Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

[75 FR 39140, July 8, 2010, as amended at 79 FR 44641, Aug. 1, 2014]

#### § 1455.2 Definitions.

(a) The definitions in part 718 of this chapter apply to this part and all documents issued in accordance with this part, except as otherwise provided in this section.

(b) The following definitions apply to this part:

*Appropriate wildlife habitat* means habitat that is suitable or proper, as determined by the applicable State or tribal government, to support fish and wildlife populations in the area.

*Farm land* means the land that meets definition of “farmland” in §718.2 of this title.

*Forest land* means land at least 120 feet wide and 1 acre in size with at least 10 percent cover (or equivalent stocking) by live trees of any size, including land that formerly had such tree cover and that will be naturally or artificially regenerated. Forest land includes transition zones, such as areas between forest and nonforest lands that have at least 10 percent cover (or equivalent stocking) with live trees and forest areas adjacent to urban and built-up lands. Roadside, streamside, and shelterbelt strips of trees must have a crown width of at least 120 feet and continuous length of at least 363 feet to qualify as forest land. Unimproved roads and trails, streams, and clearings in forest areas are classified as forest if they are less than 120 feet wide or an acre in size. Tree-covered areas in agricultural production settings, such as fruit orchards, or tree-covered areas in urban settings, such as city parks, are not considered forest land.

*Privately-held land* means farm, ranch, or forest land that is owned or operated by an individual or entity that is not an entity of any government unit or Tribe.

*Ranch land* means land that meets the definition of “farmland.”

*State or State government* means any State or local government, including State, city, town, or county government.

*Tribal government* means any Federally-recognized Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group, or community, including pueblos, rancherias, colonies and any Alaska Native Village, or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601-1629h), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

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*Wildlife-dependent recreation* means a land use involving hunting, fishing, wildlife-observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation, or other activities as determined by CCC.

### § 1455.10 Eligible grant applicants.

(a) A State or Tribal government may apply for a VPA-HIP grant.

(b) Any applications received by an individual or entity that is not a State or tribal government will not be considered.

### § 1455.11 Application procedure.

(a) *Announcement of Program Funding (APF)*. The CCC will issue periodic APFs for VPA-HIP on *www.grants.gov* subject to available funding. Unless otherwise specified in the applicable APF, applicants must file an original and one hard copy of the required forms and an application.

(b) *Single application*. A State or tribal government must include all proposed activity under a single application per APF review period. Multiple applications from an applicant during a single APF period will not be considered. The applicant is the individual State or Tribe; any application from any unit of the State or tribal government must be coordinated for a single submission of one application from the State or Tribe.

(c) *Incomplete applications*. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. However, incomplete applications may be returned, and may be resubmitted, if time permits.

(d) *Providing data*. Data furnished by grant applicants will be used to determine eligibility for the VPA-HIP benefits. Furnishing the data is voluntary; however, the failure to provide data could result in program benefits being withheld or denied.

(e) *Required forms*. The following forms must be completed, signed, and submitted as part of the application; other forms may be required, as specified in the applicable APF:

- (1) Application for Federal Assistance;
- (2) Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs; and
- (3) Assurances—Non-Construction Programs.

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(f) *Application*. Each application must contain the following elements; additional required elements may be specified in the applicable APF:

- (1) Title page;
- (2) Table of contents;
- (3) Executive summary, which includes;

(i) *Activities*. Provide a summary of the application that briefly describes activities proposed to be funded under the grant.

(ii) *Objectives, funding, performance, and other resources*. Include objectives and tasks to be accomplished, the amount of funding requested, how the work will be performed, whether organizational staff, consultants or contractors will be used, and whether other resources will be used;

(4) Eligibility certification that certifies that the applicant is a State or tribal government and the individual submitting the application is acting in a representative capacity on behalf of the State or tribal government;

(5) Application narrative that must include, but is not limited to, the following:

(i) *Project title*. The title of the proposed project must be brief (not to exceed 75 characters) yet describe the essentials of the project.

(ii) *Information sheet*. A separate one-page information sheet listing each of the evaluation criteria referenced in the APF, followed by the page numbers of all relevant material and documentation contained in the application that address or support the criteria.

(iii) *Objectives of the project*. This section must include the following:

(A) A description of how the VPA-HIP funding will be used to encourage public access to private farm, ranch, and forest land for hunting, fishing, and other recreational purposes;

(B) A description of the methods that will be used to achieve the provisions of paragraph (f)(5)(iii)(A) of this section;

(C) A description of how and to what extent the proposed program will meet with widespread acceptance among landowners;

(D) A detailed description of how and to what extent the land enrolled will have appropriate wildlife habitat and